



BENIN



INTRODUCTION

Present day Benin was the site of Dahomey, a West African kingdom that rose to prominence in about 1600 and over the next two and a half centuries became a regional power. French Dahomey achieved independence in 1960 and changed its name to the Republic of Benin in 1975.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President Patrice TALON

Head of Government

President Patrice TALON

Government Type

presidential republic

Capital

Porto-Novo (constitutional capital); Cotonou (seat of government)

Legislature

unicameral National Assembly (83 seats)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 112,622 sq km

Land: 110,622 sq km

Water: 2,000 sq km

Climate

tropical; hot, humid in south; semiarid in north

Natural Resources

small offshore oil deposits, limestone, marble, timber

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

robust economic growth; slightly declining but still widespread poverty; strong trade relations with Nigeria; cotton exporter; COVID-19 has led to capital outflows and border closures; WAEMU member with currency pegged to the euro; recent fiscal deficit and debt reductions

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$40.3 billion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$3,300 (2020 est.)

Industries - textiles, food processing, construction materials, cement

Agricultural products - cassava, yams, maize, cotton, oil palm fruit, rice, pineapples, tomatoes, vegetables, soybeans

Exports \$3.056 billion (2018 est.)

cotton, refined petroleum, gold, cashews, copper (2019)

partners: Nigeria 25%, Bangladesh 14%, UAE 14%, India 13%, China 8%, Vietnam 5% (2019)

Imports \$5.458 billion (2019 est.)

rice, cars, palm oil, electricity, cotton (2019)

partners: China 28%, Thailand 9%, India 8%, Togo 6%, US 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

13.3 million (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

3.36% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Fon and related 38.4%, Adja and related 15.1%, Yoruba and related 12%, Bariba and related 9.6%, Fulaini and related 8.6%, Ottamari and related 6.1%, other 10% (2013 est.)

Language

55 languages; French (official); Fon (a Gbe language) and Yoruba are the most important indigenous languages in the south; half a dozen regionally important languages in the north, including Bariba (once counted as a Gur language) and Fulfulde

Religion

Muslim 27.7%, Roman Catholic 25.5%, Protestant 13.5%, Vodoun 11.6%, other Christian 9.5%, other traditional religions 2.6%, other 2.6%, none 5.8% (2013 est.)

